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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, which is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/157, reports on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in the resolution.

* A/71/150.
** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/157, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit at its seventy-first session a report including information provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in the resolution.

II. Information received from Member States[1]

Argentina

2. Argentina reported that, as a result of extensive national consultations, a document entitled "Towards a national plan against discrimination in Argentina: analysis and proposals" based on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, had been approved.

3. Interreligious policy is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, which maintains the relationship and dialogue between the Government and religious entities other than the Roman Catholic Church.

4. The National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism has a mandate, as set out in Decree No. 1086/2005, that includes strengthening and promoting the principle of pluralism and religious diversity, promoting the diversity of worship and confessions as a value in society and promoting the eradication of discriminatory practices, stereotyping and prejudices directed against, in particular, followers of African religions.

5. In addition, the Institute pursues and proposes diverse initiatives to combat intolerance and considers complaints by individuals and members of civil society on diverse forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. It also provides assistance to victims of discrimination, racism and xenophobic aggression through its office of assistance to victims.

6. In Argentina, as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, African religions have been systematically stigmatized. Crimes committed by a person associated with an "Afro cult" are often negatively referred to in the media as "Umbanda rites" or "Umbanda sect" cases.

7. The Institute tackles the issue from various angles, including through prevention and by promoting activities such as its Afrodescendant programme and intercultural section, which are aimed at augmenting and implementing effective public policies that take into account the specific needs and realities of people of African descent. It also focuses on promoting the visibility and raising awareness of the historical contributions of people of African descent in Argentina and on eradicating discrimination against them.

[1] The present report summarizes contributions received from Member States further to a note verbale dated 7 April 2016. The full texts of the submissions are available for consultation at the Anti-Racial Discrimination Section, Rule of Law, Equality and Non-discrimination Branch, of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Australia

8. Australia reported that all Australians are entitled to express and practice their religion and their beliefs, without intimidation and interference, provided that those practices abide by Australian law. Under section 116 of the Constitution, the Government is prohibited from making any law for establishing any religion, imposing any religious observance or prohibiting the free exercise of any religion.

9. The Constitution also contains an implied guarantee of freedom of communication in relation to political matters, which the High Court has determined is essential to the proper functioning of the system of democratic and representative government. This freedom can be limited only by laws that are reasonably appropriate and adapted to achieving a legitimate end or overriding public purpose, such as protecting the public from danger provoked by materials promoting violence.

10. The multicultural policies and programmes include national initiatives aimed at promoting interreligious, intercultural and interfaith harmony and dialogue as tangible outcomes and benefits for all Australians.

11. A multicultural community liaison officer network operates across Australia, developing a productive and collaborative engagement with diverse communities, including religious groups, and key stakeholders, including parliamentarians, to strengthen linkages to the Government and to support a productive and diverse society. An ethnic liaison officer network was created in 2013 to facilitate interaction between ethnic communities and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

12. The Multicultural Access and Equity Policy ensures that all government programmes and services are accessible to all eligible Australians, regardless of their cultural, religious or linguistic backgrounds. The policy promotes training and development measures to Government departments and agencies, providing their staff with cultural competency skills.

13. Australia has funded a range of community-led mentor training programmes and workshops that support the efforts of youth and individual leaders to counter violent extremism. Ethnic liaison officers, for example, engage with community leaders to discuss issues, including discrimination, marginalization and how to avert violent extremism.

Bahrain

14. The Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Religious Property noted that recently there had been a dialogue on national reconciliation organized by the King of Bahrain involving representatives of all sectors of society, including "partnership residents", during which many issues were considered, including religious rights.

15. The Constitution of Bahrain attaches importance to rights, human dignity and peaceful coexistence without discrimination on the basis of race, sex or opinion. Article 4 establishes that justice is the basis of society and article 18 states that "people are equal in dignity before the law in rights and obligations" and that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, origin, language, religion or opinion. Bahrain, in reviewing its human rights laws, takes the principles of international human rights treaties into account.

16. The Government reports that it is taking measures to combat terrorism in all its forms, in particular hate crimes, through the recommendations issued by the two chambers of the National Assembly in 2013. These recommendations include: sanctions for incitement to violence and for terrorism in all its forms and aspects; aggravated sanctions for those who incite the perpetration of terrorist crimes; aggravated sanctions for the perpetration of all crimes of violence and terrorism in all its forms; and legislative measures against political associations that incite violence.

17. Crimes leading to discrimination against a category of people or that denigrate them are addressed by measures in the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, which are implemented by the authorities. In addition, the national human rights institution receives complaints, studies and refers cases to the competent national authority and provides assistance to complainants. It is a crime under article 309 of the Penal Code to publicly attack, insult or denigrate a recognized religion or religious symbol. Law No. 26 of 2005 on political association prohibits the constitution of a group of people on the basis of class, geography or profession that discriminates on the grounds of sex, origin, language, religion or opinion.

18. Ministerial decision 23/2009 stipulates that speeches, seminars and conferences must respect good citizenship, the principle of peaceful coexistence and the leadership of the King, who is a national symbol of unity.

19. The declaration of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs calls upon speakers and "preachers" to denounce violence and other destructive attempts against the interests of people and the excessive use of force against or the ill treatment or degradation of human dignity and other forms of attacks prohibited by the sharia, regardless of who perpetrates such acts. The Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Religious Property has called upon all speakers and "preachers" to sign the declaration, which has been positively and widely received.

Bulgaria

20. Bulgaria reports that the national Commission for Protection against Discrimination is an independent specialized State body with powers to prevent discrimination, protect against discrimination and ensure equal opportunities on many grounds under the Protection against Discrimination Act, including religion and/or belief. During the period 2014-2016, cooperation with non-governmental and professional organizations in the field of combating discrimination, negative stereotyping, intolerance, xenophobia and hate speech has increased. The Commission has held working meetings, joint initiatives and media events and arranged and participated in round tables and conferences.

21. In 2014, senior officials of the Commission met representatives of the National Council of Religious Communities in Bulgaria, the Central Israelite Religious Council, the Grand Mufti's Office and the United Evangelical Churches in Bulgaria. During the meeting, opportunities for cooperation were discussed and foundations for future joint action between the Commission and the religious communities were established.

22. A scientific conference on "harmony in differences", held on 10 December 2014, Human Rights Day, was organized by the Commission, the University of

Library Studies and Information Technologies and the National Council of Religious Communities in Bulgaria, with the support of the religious affairs directorate of the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria.

23. In 2015, the Commission held a meeting with the Organization of the Jews in Pulgaria "Shalom" to discuss joint opportunities to combat acts of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism and discrimination. A programme entitled "Known and unknown", which was broadcast on Bulgarian National Radio, featured a discussion dedicated to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on such topics as combating racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism and the attitudes and responses of contemporary Bulgarian society. The Commission also organized an essay competition on "tolerance lessons" in the countryside.

24. Bulgaria reported 10 and 12 cases lodged on the basis of discrimination in 2014 and in 2015, including cases based on belief and/or religion and other grounds, such as ethnicity, personal status and political opinion. One of the topical issues was the wearing of burkas by those who practise Islam.

Denmark

25. In November 2015, the Danish National Police launched a nationwide programme in November 2015 to closely monitor the development of hate crimes. The programme has stimulated a dialogue with a number of stakeholders and will establish closer cooperation with them and determine ways to increase the number of victims who report hate crimes. Cadets at the Danish police academy take an obligatory course on hate crimes and new officers from all 12 police regions receive training in the handling and registration of such crimes. Denmark reports that an annual publication on reported hate crimes will be incorporated into existing training courses and will be used to develop new training initiatives on hate crimes.

26. In 2015, overall national responsibility for the prevention of and efforts to combat hate crimes was transferred from the Danish Security and Intelligence Service to the Danish National Police. Denmark works to educate and guide all groups of Danish society, while combating hate crimes and discrimination through legislative measures and campaigns.

27. Sections 244 to 246 of the Criminal Code contain provisions regarding violence and assaults. Section 23 provides for an offence if a person is complicit in such acts by incitement or aiding and abetting. Section 81 (6) makes it an aggravating circumstance in the sentencing of a criminal act if the act was based on the ethnic origin, religion or sexuality of others or similar issues. Section 266 (b) provides that any person who, publicly or with the intent of dissemination to a wide group, issues a statement or other communication threatening, humiliating or degrading persons of a particular group because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religious faith or sexuality is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

28. The Danish Constitutional Act provides for full freedom of religious belief and association. Under section 67, citizens shall be at liberty to form congregations for religious worship in a manner that is in accordance with their convictions, provided that nothing contrary to good morals or public order shall be taught or done.

29. According to section 137 (2) of the Criminal Code, any person who disturbs, among other things, a worship service or other public church service by noise or

disorderly behaviour, or who disturbs a funeral or burial service in an improper manner, is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years. Section 139 (1) of the Code provides that any person who desecrates a grave or is guilty of abusing a human corpse is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months. Section 139 (2) imposes the same penalty on any person who is guilty of abusing items belonging to a church and used for religious purposes.

Germany

30. The German Basic Law (Constitution) provides for freedom of expression and freedom of faith and conscience and enshrines article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Basic Law and other legislation prohibit discrimination on religious grounds. For example, the General Act on Equal Treatment prohibits discrimination on religious grounds in employment. In this regard, courts in Germany deal mainly with questions concerning the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women in the workplace.

31. The Federal Ministry of the Interior promotes interreligious and intercultural dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims. The German Islam Conference is a permanent communication process between the German State (Federal Government, Federal Länder and municipalities) and representatives of the Muslim communities in Germany.[2]

32. In Germany, offences involving discrimination against persons on the basis of religion or belief, in particular violent offences, are recorded and analysed separately as hate crimes, which are considered to be politically motivated crimes. Some 90 per cent of these offences have been attributed to right-wing-oriented and politically motivated crime. Under criminal law, hate crime involving contempt for other human beings, which includes discrimination or violence on the basis of religion or faith, means that the courts generally hand out stricter sentences or, in the case of murder, consider the offender to have acted on base motives (section 211 of the Criminal Code). Specific forms of hate crime involving a religious aspect are also punishable, depending on the individual case, as incitement to hatred (section 130), the defamation of religious associations (section 166) or insults (section 185), at least in cases when the offence was targeted at an individual.

33. Hate crimes are prosecuted as offences against State security and are recorded separately. Such crimes are systematically prosecuted and include investigation teams set up for this purpose, where appropriate. In addition, the police force takes regular preventive measures, such as stepping up physical protection or police controls with regard to particularly vulnerable points (e.g., Jewish cemeteries). The police force of the Federal Länder supports victims' assistance projects, associations and institutions and other counselling bodies in an effort to encourage those seeking help to come forward, reduce barriers and raise confidence in the police and in their work.

34. In 2015 the obligation to prove "bias motives" and document the result in cases of violent crime was implemented in the guidelines for police investigations (Polizeiliche Dienstvorschriften, PDV 100), with the main objective of

[2] See www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de.

comprehensively recognizing "such motives during police investigations in order to ensure their consideration as an aggravating circumstance during prosecution and sentencing.

35. Recently, the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection established a task force together with Facebook, Google, Twitter, as well as several civil society organizations, to jointly work out suggestions on how to deal with hate speech on the Internet. The participants agreed that hate speech prohibited under German law would be reviewed and removed from the Internet in a timely manner. Hate speech can, according to German law, constitute a statutory offence, when incitement to hatred or violence is directed against a person or a group on the basis of race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or identity, gender, age or disabilities or any other characteristic inherent to the members of the group. The companies participating in the task force have committed themselves to certain measures aimed at more effective "notice and take-down" procedures.

36. The Federal President, the Federal Chancellor, other members of the Government and other officials speak out regularly against intolerance, as do civil society leaders, including religious leaders.

Honduras

37. Honduras reported on several relevant legislative measures, including Decree No. 23-2013, which amended: (a) article 27 of the Penal Code, in which committing a crime of hatred or contempt on the basis of sex, gender, religion, national origin, association with indigenous and African descent, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, marital status or disability, ideology or political views of the victim is an aggravated offence; (b) article 321, which provides for the offence of discrimination and increases penalties and punishment in those cases where it was established that the act was committed by a public official or employee in the performance of their duties; and (c) article 321-A, which provides for the sentencing or imprisonment for whoever publicly or through the media or dissemination to the public, incites discrimination, hatred, contempt, persecution or any form of violence or attacks against a person, group or association, foundation, corporation, non-governmental organization by any of the grounds specified in article 321.

38. The Secretary of State in the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Sports is responsible for cultural and artistic activity with regard to the development, implementation and evaluation of policies regarding research into and the dissemination of cultural traditions, art education and the identification, conservation and protection of the cultural patrimony of the nation.

39. African Heritage Month is commemorated every year to recognize the contribution that black communities have made in Honduran society throughout its history. The Indigenous Centre for Craft Training is an initiative to promote the technical training of indigenous peoples of the western area of the country.

40. Honduras reported that the slogan for the 2015 school year was "Improving school coexistence to influence social coexistence", stressing the importance of space for diversity and tolerance among all stakeholders in the educational process.

Italy

41. The protection of freedom of religion, especially with regard to individuals, associations and religious organizations, is guaranteed in article 8 of the Constitution concerning the establishment of effective relationships between State and religious confessions. There is no State religion in Italy, and article 19 of the Constitution sets out the right to freedom of religion and belief.

42. Italy reported that religious denominations without an *intesa* (agreement) enjoy the same treatment as others and that the absence of one does not affect a religious group's ability to worship freely. The Constitutional Court has repealed the provision (royal decree No. 289/1930) granting authorization by a decree of the Head of State for the opening of a religious site (decision No. 59/58). Accordingly, religious denominations that have not signed any *intesa* with the State can apply for State funding for the building and equipping of religious sites (Constitutional Court verdict No. 195/1993), as long as the purpose of the religious denomination stems from its statute and previous public manifestations. More recently, judgment No. 63/2016 of the Constitutional Court on the constitutional legitimacy of Regional Law No. 2/2015 (Lombardy) reiterated that: (a) Italy recognized both freedom of religion and confessional pluralism; (b) the free exercise of worship was an essential aspect of freedom of religion which was equally extended to all people and to all religious denominations regardless of the conclusion of an agreement with the State and (c) the establishment and opening of new places of worship were protected under article 19 of the Constitution and did not require the conclusion of any *intesa*.

43. In order to combat all forms of religious discrimination and societal prejudices, in particular against Jewish and Muslims communities, the Government continues, among other things, to host meetings to raise awareness of interreligious dialogue. Religious and government officials continue to encourage mutual understanding. There is an ongoing debate about whether Muslim women are free to wear the veil in public. According to Act No. 152/75 adopted in the 1970s, individuals are forbidden to hide their identity for reasons of public order.

44. Various bodies work to promote and protect religious freedom in Italy, such as the Office of Studies and Institutional Relations of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the National Office against Racial Discrimination and the Observatory of Security against Acts of Discrimination.

45. In view of recent developments, Italy noted the signing of an *intesa* with the Istituto Buddista Italiano Soka Gakkai on 27 June 2015, in accordance with article 8 of the Constitution. The bill concerning the approval of the *intesa* has been passed by the Senate and is now before the Chamber of Deputies. It also noted the establishment of the joint committee for the renovation of "Block 21" at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and for the establishment of the new and relevant Italian exhibition. On the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (27 January 2016, established by Act No. 211/2000), the Presidency of the Council of Ministers organized, with the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, a round table, entitled "Anti-Semitism, fear of difference, incitement to hatred: yesterday and today".

Mexico

46. The Constitution acknowledges the right to freedom of religion and establishes measures aimed at protection against discrimination on the basis of, among other things, religious beliefs. In 2014, the Federal Act to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination was amended in order to broaden the right to the guarantees of non-discrimination, including in the process for making complaints, expand equality measures, strengthen the obligations of governmental authorities and diversify remedial measures. The Act establishes provisions to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and treatment. It also unifies procedures against acts of discrimination by the authorities and individuals, in addition to establishing measures to address the damages incurred.

47. The National Council to Prevent Discrimination has created the National Programme for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2014-2018 which assigns specific lines of responsibility to various agencies of the federal public administration to verify and strengthen rules and practices so that regulatory provisions and administrative actions that encourage or tolerate discriminatory practices may be removed. Mexico reports that strategy 5.5 of the programme includes generating and disseminating knowledge about religious and cultural diversity; promoting alternative activities to the dominant cultural and religious practices in the national education system; promoting coordination with and between movements and religious associations that promote practices of tolerance, respect and a culture of peace; promoting community projects with social organizations to combat cultural, regional and religious intolerance; and promoting awareness of and combating anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

48. The Ministry of the Interior oversees compliance with the constitutional and legal provisions on public worship, churches, religious groups and associations, carries out the promotion and defence of the secular State and supports the diversity of religious expressions as part of the recognition of the exercise of religious freedom.

49. In 2014, the National Council adapted the experience of the Council of Europe with the social networking campaign, the "No Hate Speech Movement", to the specific circumstances of the country, and created the "Young, Sintags" campaign, which uses social campaigns and community processes on the Internet to direct young people to combat hate speech online and offline.

50. In 2011, a religiously diverse group was set up, including representatives of various Christian churches (Catholic, Baptist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Adventist and Light of the World), the Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist communities and new movements, such as Scientology. The group meets every three months at the offices of the National Council to discuss the situation of religious discrimination and generate joint actions.

51. In 2015, the National Council organized a forum entitled "The contribution of religion to non-discrimination", the aim of which was to promote dialogue between religious associations through inclusion and non-discrimination. The forum featured speakers from the Shalom Baptist Church, the Anglican Church and the Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist communities. Following the attacks in Paris in 2015, the National Council made a special rapprochement with the members of the Muslim community in Mexico, who have been attacked both in the media and physically in

the streets. Mexico reports that the community was supported with advice for holding a press conference at the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching, by a statement on the National Council's website and through ongoing dialogue. The first Congress of Muslim Latinas was held in February 2016 in Mexico City.

Montenegro

52. Montenegro reported that the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights had registered no cases of intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons on the basis of religion or belief in the public since the beginning of 2016. Maximum efforts are made to enable the exercise of constitutional rights and the highest international standards by all religious communities so that the state of religious freedom in the country, according to the assessment of Montenegro, is at a high level. The Constitution, the Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities, the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination and the Criminal Code prohibit and sanction any form of, incitement to or instigation of hatred and intolerance, as well as direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, religion, national or social origin or membership in or association with a national minority.

53. Montenegro reported that, in practice, the competent national authorities effectively implemented the provisions of the Constitution and the laws concerning respect for freedom of religion and the prohibition of discrimination and violence on the basis of religion. There is an ongoing procedure for the adoption of the new Law on Freedom of Religion, which, in accordance with the highest international standards and the legal system of Montenegro, provides for the prohibition of all forms of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or the manifestation of those beliefs, and the prohibition of incitement to religious hatred and intolerance.

54. The Ministry has developed a plan to implement this legal framework, including a strategy on education and the promotion of anti-discriminatory behaviour by the media. Seminars and workshops on the topic of protection against discrimination are held annually for civil servants, judicial officials and employees of other independent bodies and organizations, as well as local governments.

55. From 2011 to 2015, the Ministry launched, a number of annual campaigns on the prohibition of discrimination through the media and introduced rights guaranteed by law. The campaign focused on respect for diversity, rejection of discrimination and acceptance of diversity.

Oman

56. Oman noted that, with regard to education, the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs did not supervise religious education in schools, although it is consulted on the religious curriculum. The experts who write and review the curriculum do so by taking into account international human rights standards and tolerance, moderation and national coexistence among people. The curriculum is developed from: verses of the Koran on compassionate cooperation and recognition of other religions in the Koran; good examples of Omanis nationally and from abroad who value non-discrimination on the basis of race and religion; and modern Islamic experiences in which Omanis and Muslims are involved.

57. With respect to university education, the Faculty of Sharia Studies is collaborating with Al-Azhar University in Egypt to write curricula founded on non-discrimination and against racism and that contain chapters on the religions of the world. There are exchange programmes and studies abroad between universities in Oman and internationally.

58. Oman reports that, under the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs, thousands of imams are provided with weekly guidance on preaching, taking a moderate form of Islam, the culture of the society, the environment and ongoing events into consideration, with the objective of guiding people in the right way without inciting or agitating them. This effort has resulted in an improvement, as reflected in a greater number of preachers with formal training over the past three decades. Similarly, in 2015, the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman delivered 15 speeches on a culture of moderation, combating violent extremism, discrimination and intolerance, including calls for equality and the fraternity of humankind. Oman reported that scholars in the country were consulted on those speeches with other scholars in the Gulf and Arab region. It is felt that, in the light of acts of violent extremism, there is a need for more cooperation.

59. There are also monthly and annual conferences and scientific seminars organized by the Ministry. Oman reported on its "Journal of tolerance and understanding", which contains scientific and cultural articles and information on efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination, criticism of extremism in the name of religion and encouragement of the values of tolerance, compassion and coexistence. The journal entitled "Young people understand" allows young people to engage positively with respect to the issues mentioned in the "Journal of tolerance and understanding".

Pakistan

60. The Government reported that it had undertaken various programmes and projects to promote harmony in the country, that provincial governments had taken steps to further promote the rights of all its citizens and that various federal ministries and government bodies had held a number of seminars, conferences and consultative meetings.

61. A national conference on interfaith harmony entitled "Living together with diversity: inter-faith and intercultural dialogue" was held from 20 to 22 February 2013. The Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony recently held meetings with scholars of all Muslim sects in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta to find common ground for a shared code of conduct. Interfaith harmony conferences were held in all the provincial headquarters in 2015 and local interfaith harmony committees have been established. A national Muslim scholars council has been set up to maintain sectarian harmony in the country.

62. Pakistan also reported on improved security measures with regard to religious occasions and religious places of worship, housing schemes, health facilities, educational improvements and aid grants for specific minority communities. Furthermore, training on human rights education is provided for military and police academies and public officials.

63. Pakistan reported that the composition and terms of reference for the National Commission on Minorities, which were revised, approved and made public in May

2015, included, among other things: (a) the development of a national policy on interfaith harmony to explore avenues for peace and security; (b) the consideration of laws, executive instructions, orders and practices of government departments and agencies that might be discriminatory towards minorities; (c) recommendations to the Government to ensure the full and effective participation by the members of minority communities in all aspects of national life; and (d) ensuring that churches, shrines, temples, gurdwaras and other places of worship of minority communities were preserved, well-kept and fully functional.

64. The Government noted that it had taken strong action against hate speech. Loudspeakers have been banned to discourage hate speech and violators have been arrested. The electronic media are regulated by the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002 (XIII), which was strengthened by the 2007 amendment in section 20, stating the following:

> Programmes and advertisements shall not contain or encourage violence, terrorism, racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, sectarianism, extremism, militancy, hatred, pornography, obscenity, vulgarity or other material offensive to commonly accepted standards of decency. Further clauses (c) (d) and (e) prohibit its licenses from airing any programme which contains any abusive comment or tends or may expose an individual or a group or class of individuals to hatred, or contempt on the basis of race or caste, national ethnic or linguistic origin, colour or religion or sect.

65. In addition to constitutional protections and equal rights with respect to the practice of religion, chapter XV of the Penal Code concerns offences relating to religion. The Government reports that it has taken legislative steps to ensure the rights of minorities, including the Hindu Marriage Bill (2016), the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Bill (2014), the Christian Divorce (Amendment) Bill (2014), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Protection of Communal Properties of Minority Community Act (2014) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Hindu Disposition Property Bill (2014).

Peru

66. Article 2 (3) of the Constitution of Peru recognizes freedom of religion and conscience individually and collectively and persecution on the basis of ideas, beliefs and opinion is prohibited. Freedom of religion is the right of all individuals, and discrimination on the basis of religion is a category of discrimination in the Constitution, which enshrines the principle of non-discrimination and religious equality.

67. There is an agreement between the Holy See and Peru affording the Catholic Church specific benefits. The State has established an institutional mechanism relating to the Church and other religious confessions. Peru reports that it is taking legislative measures to further expand the right to religious freedom, including the laws governing the distribution of donations from abroad and the law of taxes on rent.

68. There are collaborative mechanisms with respect to religious communities in order to provide support for conflict prevention, work, integration and awareness-raising for the media. The "Leaders for social peace and justice" initiative, created in 2015, is developing training for public servants, teachers, youth and the

ombudsman. Recently, religious communities in Peru have asked the State to intervene with regard to the possible discriminatory features of a pending law and regulation (Decreto Supremo No. 010-2011 JUS) affecting religious freedom. An online consultation sponsored by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights is taking place, in which many people have participated.

69. In 2013, Peru undertook a national survey on the perception of human rights, in particular with regard to equality and non-discrimination, in which 81 per cent of respondents stated that discrimination existed. While the issues of religious freedom were not covered in the survey, and while the Government noted that Peruvians do not appear to see religious freedom as a problem, it reported that there was a need for further study in this regard.

70. Article 316 of the Penal Code provides for the crime of incitement to violence in general terms, and the glorification of the offence of discrimination is an offence under article 323 of the Code.

Qatar

71. The Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, established by Emiri Decree No. (20) of 2010, aims to support and promote a culture of dialogue between religions and the activation of religious values to address the problems and issues of concern to humanity. The main role of the Centre is to spread the culture and acceptance of others and peaceful coexistence among religious followers through dialogue.

72. The Centre provides opportunities for scholars and the clergy to bring forward exemplary stories from their respective scriptures to address challenges. Clergy and church officials based in Doha are invited to advise the Centre on how to improve the flow of communication between Qatari and non-Qatari residents. The Centre also regularly holds workshops to give a platform to non-Qatari residents to express their concerns regarding their well-being. Local media are invited to write about these concerns and the Government is informed of serious issues of concern to expatriates in Qatar. Every year, the Centre honours those who live in Qatar and have contributed significantly to interfaith harmony and friendship. The Centre has also hosted the annual the Doha Conference for Interfaith Dialogue for the past 12 years under the patronage of the Emir of Qatar, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The most recent conference was held on 16 and 17 February 2016 on the theme of "Spiritual and intellectual security in the light of religious doctrine". The Centre is also involved in supporting and organizing youth forums, football tournaments, radio programmes, book fairs and cultural and literary activities in Doha.

73. With regard to point (h) of the action plan contained in General Assembly resolution 70/157 "recognizing that the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence", the Government and the Centre hosted the fourth meeting of the Istanbul Process in Doha on 24 and 25 March 2015, focusing on advancing religious freedom through interfaith collaboration. The meeting brought interfaith and government experts together, contributing to the formation of collaborative partnerships between the Government and civil society in promoting those goals.

Romania

74. The State Secretariat for Religious Affairs supports and encourages the involvement of religious organizations in Romania, in particular the 18 recognized religions and religious associations, in the construction of the common good, and supports interreligious dialogue and interconfessional peace and cooperation. It has prepared and published, in Romanian (2014) and English (2015), a volume entitled: "State and religions in Romania".

75. The President of Romania, the Prime Minister and members of the Government have repeatedly affirmed the value of religious pluralism in Romania, met religious leaders representing various religious denominations active in Romania and sent messages of congratulations on the occasion of significant religious holidays.

76. During 2015, the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs continued to offer financial support, upon request, including for Muslim and Jewish communities, for the building and/or renovation of public places of worship and for social assistance programmes, as well as for the organization of public events (such as conferences, symposiums and meetings) by recognized religions. It also met the leaders of recognized religions and religious associations regularly and organized frequent consultations with their representatives on issues of mutual interest.

77. In May 2015, the Government offered a lease on land, under specific conditions, for building a new mosque for the Muslim community in Bucharest. The State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, which mediated the leasing of the land, took active steps to place the measure in the context of the existing legal framework guaranteeing religious freedom. Given that the issue had attracted media interest and risked incurring anti-Muslim sentiment, the State Secretary for Religious Affairs took steps to prevent and limit such tendencies. Particular attention is also being paid to the development of relations with Muslim non-governmental organizations active in Romania.

78. The State Secretariat for Religious Affairs has submitted a proposal to the Government to introduce explicit sanctions in the Penal Code for the propagation of extremist messages and incitement to religious hatred. That proposal is currently under review.

79. In September 2013, the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs hosted a meeting with representatives of various religious denominations concerning the constitutional revision process, discussing proposals to further emphasize the importance of religious freedom, State neutrality towards religions, partnerships between religions and the State, and other interests of Romanian religious organizations in amending the Constitution. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting have been forwarded to Parliament.

80. During the period 2013-2015, the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs co-signed, together with the Ministry of Education and the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church of Romania, among others, protocols for the administration of religious and theological education in the Romanian education system.

81. Romania cited public statements delivered on numerous occasions by the State Secretary for Religious Affairs. Romania reported that, throughout the period 2013-

2015, the State Secretary attended numerous national and international events concerning the historical status of the Jewish community and the political and social responsibilities of the Romanian State in the Holocaust. The Government, through the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, offered financing for the renovation of the "Coral" Jewish temple in Bucharest, a cultural landmark of the Jewish community in Romania.

Russian Federation

82. The Russian Federation stated that the right to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion were guaranteed by the Constitution and Federal Law No. 125-FL of 26 September 1997 on freedom of conscience and religious associations, as well as by other legislative acts. The secular character of the Russian Federation is declared by article 14 of the Constitution, under which no religion can be established as a State religion or as obligatory. All religious associations are equal before the law and separate from the State.

83. The Russian Federation continues its work to combat all forms of extremism, including intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons on the basis of religion or belief. Identifying the reasons and conditions that are conducive to the commission of crimes and ensuring their timely elimination are a priority.

84. It also reported that, in order to combat extremism, there is ongoing interaction between State authorities, supervisory bodies, public society and the mass media. The monitoring of social networks and web publications is being carried out to check for crimes of a terrorist or extremist character.

85. Particular attention is paid to the professional training of law enforcement officials. An additional professional programme on the investigation of crimes relating to extremist and terrorist activities is being implemented by the Academy of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation and regional faculties of the Advanced Training Institute. At the territorial level, special professional training in this context has also been organized.

86. The Russian Federation noted that extremism and terrorism constituted one of its most complicated social and political problems given their tendency to reappear in a variety of forms of expression and the use of scientific and technical applications for the preparation and commission of crimes. Young people are the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of extremism and terrorism. Counteracting the manifestations of extremism and terrorism, the formation of a tolerant mindset and behaviour among young people and the attainment of civil peace and consent in society are therefore among the main goals of the modern State.

Saudi Arabia

87. Saudi Arabia reported that its laws and regulations embodied the principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination in all its forms. It also reported that, while the majority of people in Saudi Arabia are Muslim, freedom of religion is guaranteed to non-Muslims in the principal regulation (Constitution), that the sharia prohibits attacks against religions and that whoever is involved in such actions is held accountable.

88. Saudi Arabia also reported that it has always asked the international community to put an end to the defamation of religions and that a dialogue between people practising these religions and people from different cultures, under the auspices of the King, has been put forward as the best way to end such practices. In addition, there are many Saudi academic scientific chairs in the field of religious dialogue and many conferences on the topic have been held. Saudi Arabia referred to the creation of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, which was established in Vienna in 2012 with the aim of fostering understanding, coexistence and tolerance among people through dialogue.

89. Saudi Arabia added that it had established a centre for dialogue between "madhabs"/schools of thought based in Riyadh and that the fifth meeting of the Istanbul Process, "From adoption to execution: promoting the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 16/18", was held in Jeddah in 2015. It also noted that a religious conference had been held in April 2015 at the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences to look at the role of the school in combating terrorism and extremism, promoting moderation and developing a vision for the future.

90. Saudi Arabia reported that freedom of expression was limited only by what was proscribed by the country's laws, which are consistent with international human rights standards. Article 39 of the Constitution provides that written or other media and other means of expressing an opinion should be used to spread the "good word" and be a positive force and that it is prohibited if such opinions negatively affect dignity and human rights. Article 26 of the media policy of the Council of Ministers and article 8 of the Regulation on Publications guarantee freedom of expression within the purview of national laws and the sharia.

91. Royal Order No. 44 of 2014 provides for the imprisonment, of a minimum of 3 years and maximum of 40 years, for carrying out terrorist acts; adherence to religious or intellectual extremist groups or organizations considered to be terrorist in Saudi Arabia, regionally or internationally; the adoption of terrorist ideology or support by any means of terrorism, whether moral, material or financial; and the incitement or dissemination of speeches supporting extremism or terrorism or through any other means. This order is meant to consolidate and reinforce the national security regulatory framework.

92. The Saudi human rights commission is charged with awareness-raising activities, training and workshops on human rights, and in 2012, Saudi Arabia signed a capacity-building memorandum of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

93. The King Abdulaziz Centre hosts awareness-raising meetings on a culture of dialogue, human rights and combating intolerance and hatred in all their forms, including discrimination. An agreement has also been signed between the Centre and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs for the training of imams to promote a culture of tolerance during seminars and Friday addresses.

Sudan

94. The Sudan stated that it attaches great importance to preventing and combating terrorism without losing sight of the humanitarian aspects and dimensions of human rights on the basis of beliefs and traditions that oppose terrorism in all its forms. In

implementing the action plan found in General Assembly resolution 70/157 to combat religious intolerance and extremism, the Sudan provided some information on actions and initiatives that it had developed and taken, including lessons learned, information-gathering and proactive steps that could be taken by the State.

95. The Sudan provided information about its experience in the "intellectual treatment" of the phenomenon of extremism and fanaticism, noting that it had various dimensions. It represents only one effective action to combat the phenomenon of extremism in Sudanese society, meaning that an "intellectual treatment" programme must be comprehensive in order to deal with the phenomenon. The Sudan indicated that different approaches were required, including individual treatment, psychological intervention and the consideration of the nature of the family history and childhood of those who had been radicalized. The involvement of community agencies, family and people of knowledge and competence were important requirements.

96. The Sudan also noted the necessity of studying cases and trends in national radicalization and extremism in order to draw lessons learned. It will also be important to determine intellectual concepts, such as the "issuance of fatwas" and the incitement against the State and society, in order to identify any misconceptions. The Sudan also noted the role of sheikhs and religious leaders in editing material for dangerous extremist content and for addressing issues of "intellectual confusion".

III. Information received from an intergovernmental organization

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

97. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights assists the States members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), religious or belief communities, civil society organizations and national human rights institutions in protecting and promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief and works closely with States and civil society groups to counter hate crime, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance, including against Muslims, Christians and followers of other religions or beliefs. Its activities include: cooperative efforts regarding commitments adopted by OSCE to prevent and respond to hate-motivated violence and to promote mutual respect and understanding; reviewing legislation; the development and promotion of educational materials and thematic guidelines; "human dimension" meetings on freedom of religion or belief and fostering mutual respect and understanding; capacity-building on freedom of religion or belief and hate crime; improving national systems and collecting and disseminating information about hate crime; and remembrance of the Holocaust.

IV. Conclusions

98. On the basis of the contributions received, it is evident that a number of Member States are continuing to take extensive steps to implement the action plan outlined in paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 10 of General Assembly resolution 70/157.

99. Of the 18 Member States that provided submissions, many reported on legal developments and revisions or amendments to existing legislation and mechanisms dealing with human rights, and to issues relating to freedom of religion and belief in particular. In some cases, it was noted that the amendments were intended to bring the national framework into line with international human rights standards and treaty obligations governing freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression and opinion, racial discrimination and non-discrimination. Some Member States reported that they had constitutional provisions concerning non-discrimination, equality, freedom of religion and belief, while several had enacted legislation, criminal codes and civil laws in order to protect against discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief.

100. Some Member States are working to address hate crimes at the national level through better monitoring, recording and reporting of hate crimes, consolidated information-gathering, victim outreach and assistance and strengthened legal prosecution. The contributors noted that, within many national constitutional and legal frameworks, advocacy of incitement to hatred was criminalized and often prohibited on a number of grounds, including on the grounds of religion or belief. Some Member States noted that their political and religious leaders speak out against intolerance, including the advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. Some Member States are also undertaking various initiatives to combat incitement to hatred, xenophobia and related intolerance and to address hate speech, including on the Internet.

101. Issues of extremism and radicalization featured in a number of responses. Member States noted that they were taking measures to combat extremism through community networks, leaders and mentoring, youth intervention, dialogue and education and educating the general public. These issues are also being addressed through social cohesion and integration programmes, police and security responses, often coupled with regular engagement and interaction with religious leaders, local communities and young people, and data-gathering and data-monitoring. The role of religious leaders and scholars was underscored, with a number of Member States noting that religious leaders were supporting and fostering interfaith dialogue and promoting the human rights issues relating to freedom of religion and belief, and calling for and providing guidance in terms of religious messaging and tone to elicit greater tolerance and moderation in order to eliminate extremism and radicalization.

102. Member States reported that, in general, there was religious freedom and pluralism nationally and that members of religious groups and communities were able to manifest their religion and contribute openly and on an equal footing in their societies. They also reported that they were dealing with the protection of minorities, including religious minorities, and Afrodescendant and indigenous groups and their religions and beliefs in a variety of ways relevant to their national context. Courts and some human rights institutions are reported to be dealing with or adjudicating contemporary issues of freedom of religion and non-discrimination in several Member States.

103. The importance of interfaith and intercultural dialogue and exchange in some form, whether national, regional or international, was underlined in

almost every submission. Interfaith dialogue serves as a forum for communication, discussion, networking, exchange and learning and provides for the open debate of ideas. It is also a means of fostering peaceful tolerance and coexistence by playing a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence.

104. Training and capacity-building on human rights, tolerance, anti-discrimination and the prevention of stereotypes for government and public officials, especially in law enforcement, police and security services, is taking place in many of the Member States that provided submissions.

105. Religious intolerance, stigmatization, negative stereotyping and discrimination, in particular, are countered through public information and media campaigns and through cultural, sporting and artistic educational measures, including online platforms of exchange, networking and engagement on the various issues concerning freedom of religion and belief and non-discrimination.

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Progress in the construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, and update on the renovation of conference facilities, including Africa Hall

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an update on activities since the issuance of the previous progress report of the Secretary-General (A/70/363 and Corr.1) on the completion of the remaining ancillary projects related to the new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, following the substantial completion of the construction of the new building and its full occupancy in August 2014, as well as an update on the Africa Hall renovation project, which was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A.

A majority of the ancillary projects related to the new office facilities were completed in August 2015, and all the remaining ancillary work was substantially completed in February 2016; the work for rectifying the remaining defects is currently ongoing and scheduled for completion by the end of 2016. The updated estimated costs to complete the new office facilities and ancillary projects remain the same as those contained in the previous report. Regarding the Africa Hall renovation project, the report provides an update on the progress made with regard to the design phase, as well as updated information on governance, the management of contingencies, efforts to seek voluntary contributions and the business case for the Visitors Centre.

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The General Assembly is requested to: take note of the progress made since the issuance of the previous report; take note of the proposed governance structure for the Africa Hall renovation project; take note of the revised cost plan for the Africa Hall renovation project within the approved maximum overall cost of $56.9 million; approve six security officer positions for the Africa Hall renovation project effective October 2017; and approve the business case for the Visitors Centre of the Africa Hall renovation project.

I. Overview

A. New office facilities (the Zambezi Building)

1. By the adoption of its resolution 56/270, the General Assembly approved the construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa. Pursuant to Assembly resolutions 56/270, 60/248 A, 62/238 and 65/290, the total approved cost of the project was $15,333,200.

2. The construction of the new office facilities was substantially completed in June 2014. The United Nations Office for Project Services, the Liaison Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the African Union and Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Office to the African Union and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund had moved into the building as of August 2014. The building, which was renamed the Zambezi Building in early 2015, currently houses over 650 staff.

3. By its resolutions 56/270 and 62/238, the General Assembly approved the required additional project components (referred to as ancillary work) related to access, safety and functionality of the new office facilities. A majority of the ancillary work was substantially completed by August 2015, and the remaining work, including work on roads, sidewalks, parking and drainage systems, was substantially completed in February 2016. The punch list and work to rectify defects are scheduled for completion by the end of 2016 before the expiry of the defects and liability period in early 2017.

4. In its resolution 70/248 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts to bring the matter of potential claims management to a swift conclusion. In response, ECA commissioned an independent assessment of the work done, which concluded that there has not been any breach of contract on the part of either the contractor or the consultant design firm, and recommended that ECA should proceed to completion of the contract.

B. Renovation of conference facilities including Africa Hall

5. In its resolution 65/259, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to expeditiously assess the status of conference facilities at ECA, in particular Africa Hall and Conference Room 1, to ensure that they were in strict compliance with the highest international standards for conference facilities. In its resolution 68/247, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, as a matter of priority, to ensure that the renovation of conference facilities at the Commission, in particular Africa Hall and Conference Room 1, was carried out. In section IX of its resolution 70/248 A, the Assembly approved the scope, schedule and the maximum overall cost of $56.9 million for the Africa Hall renovation project, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his previous report (A/70/363 and Corr.1).

6. Also in resolution 70/248 A, the General Assembly requested or encouraged the Secretary-General to: (a) continue his efforts to include local knowledge and capacity throughout the implementation of the construction projects; (b) take appropriate measures to mitigate potential risks and to monitor closely the Africa Hall renovation project in order to avoid any further delay; (c) update Member

States, through the Office of Central Support Services, on the progress of the construction projects; (d) further clarify the roles and responsibilities of the internal control mechanism and the Stakeholders Committee to ensure that their working arrangements are set out in clear terms; (e) establish an advisory board that is independent and impartial, with its membership reflecting a wide geographical representation while ensuring the required expertise; (f) provide detailed information on the management of the contingency provision; (g) continue to seek voluntary contributions for the Africa Hall renovation project and to report thereon; and (h) present an updated business case for the Visitors Centre in the context of the next progress report. The present report addresses the above requests from the Assembly.

II. Update on the construction of the new office facilities and ancillary work

A. New office facilities

7. The construction of the new office facilities was substantially completed on 19 June 2014, and the premises were fully occupied and operational by August 2014. This was followed by a one-year defects liability period, during which the contractor was obligated to correct items agreed to be executed after occupancy, as well as any defects detected thereafter.

8. As related in the previous progress report, the contractor did not complete the correction of defects logged in the punch list, citing financial difficulties arising from the decision of ECA to withhold an amount of $468,370, representing 50 per cent of 10 per cent of the value of each contractor's invoice, which would otherwise have been due upon substantial completion of the project. That amount had been retained since June 2014 pending the conclusion of an independent assessment, commissioned by ECA, which would serve as a basis for ensuring that the Organization's best interests had been upheld in all aspects of the contract.

9. The independent assessment was commissioned by ECA in 2015. The independent assessment was carried out by a specialized international quantity surveying firm with regional knowledge to provide an impartial opinion and verification of the executed work. The objective of the assessment was to determine if the work carried out conformed to the terms and specifications of the contract. In addition, the independent assessment was to reveal if there had been any breaches of the contract for which the United Nations might be entitled to reimbursement.

10. The assessment report from the quantity surveying firm, which was submitted on 6 January 2016, concluded that there had not been any breach of contract on the part of either the contractor or the consultant design firm, and recommended that ECA should proceed and complete the contract. Based on these findings, in April 2016, the Executive Secretary authorized payment of the amount of $468,370 withheld since June 2014. The remaining 50 per cent of the 10 per cent retained from the contractors' invoices will be paid upon completion of the final warranty/punch list actions scheduled for the first quarter of 2017.

11. The Facility Management Section of ECA is monitoring the correction and installation of outstanding punch-list items yet to be completed. Once completed, the contractor will be issued a certificate of final completion, which will be

followed by the release of the final amount held in retention, minus the value of any work that cannot be completed by the contractor and must therefore be completed by ECA.

12. It should be recalled that the remaining punch-list items do not compromise life safety or core functionality of the building.

B. Ancillary projects

13. As previously reported by the Secretary-General (see A/68/517, A/69/359 and A/70/363 and Corr.1), the United Nations explored all options to ensure the completion of the ancillary projects within the approved project cost. As a result, project activities that were essential in order to have the building occupied in 2014 were prioritized, negotiations were carried out with selected contractors, value-engineering measures were introduced, where feasible, and the assistance of the host country authorities was engaged, when needed.

14. The majority of the ancillary work was completed in 2015, and the remaining components, notably the completion of work on the east parking area, the greenery and landscaping, internal access roads and the walkways/site drainage, were available for use by August 2015 and substantially completed by February 2016. Following the issuance of the substantial completion certificate for the ancillary work, ECA developed a punch list of items to be corrected during the defects liability period, which will terminate in the last quarter of 2016.

C. Procurement

15. Information on procurement activity related to the ancillary projects was provided by the Secretary-General in his previous progress report (A/70/363 and Corr.1). Although a majority of the procurement activities for the road and parking projects took place from 2012 to 2014, after two failed procurement exercises, ECA engaged the host country through the Addis Ababa City Road Authority to ensure timely and successful completion of those outstanding items in 2015, in preparation for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which took place from 13 to 16 July 2015 at ECA.

16. Given the fact that this action did not comply with the established procurement policies and procedures, the Secretary-General referred the matter to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The results of its review are included in the OIOS report on the audit of management of construction activities and related processes in ECA (internal audit report No. 2016/086).

17. In summary, OIOS confirmed that established procurement policies and procedures were not followed, and recommended that ECA seek an ex post facto review by the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services of the exchange of letters signed with a Addis Ababa City Road Authority to procure services to perform construction work. OIOS also recommended that the management of ECA issue an internal memorandum reminding all staff members involved in the procurement process of their responsibility to act within their delegated authority.

18. The Headquarters Committee on Contracts reviewed the case on 13 July 2016 and recommended that the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services

not take note of the matter. The minutes, including the recommendation of OIOS, were approved by the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services on 19 July 2016.

19. ECA is implementing measures to ensure that future procurement actions fully comply with established policies and procedures.

D. Host country coordination

20. The continued support of the host country, notably during the final phase of the ancillary projects, has been critical in the successful execution of the new office facilities project throughout its implementation, and has provided essential assistance in overcoming logistical difficulties. The Secretary-General is grateful to the host country for its continued support in facilitating the smooth delivery of infrastructure components for the project.

E. Project schedule

21. The substantial completion date of the new office facilities, as previously reported, was 19 June 2014, followed by a one-year defects liability period that ended in June 2015. The revised final completion date of the project is the first quarter of 2017. This date was extended owing to the need to finalize the independent assessment report.

F. Cost estimates

22. The overall estimated costs for the new office facilities remain unchanged at the approved amount of $15,333,200. A detailed breakdown of expenditures as at 31 August 2016 is provided in annex I to the present report.

23. Payments in the total amount of $755,289 are pending for:

(a) A final amendment to the ancillary project contract was executed on 20 July 2016, resulting in work in the amount of $116,630 being carried out in the third and fourth quarters of 2016;

(b) Ten per cent of the cost of the ancillary projects in the amount of $170,289; 5 per cent will be released by the end of 2016 and the remaining 5 per cent after the defects and liability period;

(c) Five per cent of the total new office facilities invoices in the amount of $468,370, as explained in paragraphs 10 and 11 above.

III. Update on the Africa Hall renovation project

A. Background

24. By its resolution 70/248 A (section IX), the General Assembly approved the project scope, schedule and maximum overall cost in the amount of $56.9 million for stages 3 to 5 of the Africa Hall renovation project, the establishment of a

multi-year construction-in-progress account and the appropriation of an amount of $13,438,600 under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

B. Project objectives

25. The main objectives of the project are to address the inadequacies related to building safety and functionality and to transform Africa Hall into a rejuvenated facility that complies with the highest international standards for conference facilities. As part of the efforts to preserve and restore the historical and cultural values embedded in its architecture, another objective of the project is to include a Visitors Centre in order to make Africa Hall one of the leading tourist destinations in Addis Ababa and to highlight its significant role in modern African history.

C. Project scope

26. The scope of the project addresses structural inadequacies, the occupants' health and safety issues and shortcomings in terms of access for persons with disabilities. Upgrades to the building will be undertaken in a manner that respects the original design and appearance while ensuring compliance with best practices related to current international building standards and codes. The establishment of a Visitors Centre to exhibit the rich history of the African continent, of ECA in Addis Ababa and of the African Union is also envisaged.

27. The scope of the renovation project includes all elements of the Africa Hall Building, covering approximately 8,300 square metres of floor area and its immediate external landscape. The priorities envisaged for the proposed renovation remain as follows:

(a) Structural upgrading, essential life and health safety issues and building work;

(b) Plenary Hall and associated work;

(c) External work and landscaping;

(d) Heritage conservation;

(e) Visitors Centre, including a screening building, a new entrance and reserved parking.

D. Business case for the Visitors Centre

28. The purpose of the establishment of the Visitors Centre is to provide the general public with an opportunity to visit the iconic and historically significant Africa Hall, so that its importance in the history of modern Africa may be well established, and to recognize the important role played by African leaders and the United Nations in that regard. The construction of such a centre was envisioned at the ceremony marking the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of ECA on 24 October 2008. In the same way that the United Nations Office at Geneva is the custodian of the documents, history and art associated with the League of Nations, ECA is the guardian of Africa Hall, which was the original meeting place of the

Organization of African Unity, the pan-African organization now known as the African Union. The Visitors Centre would focus on Africa Hall as a desirable destination for those wishing to learn about African history and the genesis of what is today the African Union. In addition, the Visitors Centre is intended to support the ECA programmatic objective of improving outreach and communications with its constituents and strengthening partnership and collaboration with Member States as part of its overall mandate and communications strategy.

29. The main components of the Visitors Centre include:

(a) **A permanent lecture gallery**: The gallery is to be used for screening and displaying films, photography and other relevant presentations, including materials on selected themes derived from the ECA programme plan as part of its communications and outreach activities;

(b) **Exhibition**: A permanent exhibition space and mini-cinema would: present multi-screen presentations to elucidate Africa Hall's place in African history; show other informational videos and presentations relevant to Africa's development in order to promote the work of the United Nations and ECA; and include large-scale graphic panels and display cases with integrated lighting and caption cards;

(c) **Art**: Among the historical pieces of art owned by the Commission is the prominent, stained glass mural executed by Ethiopia's most celebrated artist, the late Afewerk Tekle, who was commissioned by ECA, in 1958, to decorate Africa Hall. Additional works of art from the 1960s grace the exterior and interior walls of Africa Hall and the adjacent area on the first floor of the Niger Building.

30. In this regard, guided tours would be conducted for the public, school groups, embassy officials, visiting students and participants attending major events and conferences in Addis Ababa through a pre-arranged reservation system. Visitors would also have access to the ECA gift shop and book store at the conclusion of public tours.

31. Marketing would be a major aspect in the initial growth, visibility and development of the Visitors Centre. The Centre would benefit from current media relations in place, as well as from social media and the newly revamped ECA website. Other tools such as telemarketing and targeted e-mails, magazines, pamphlets and other multimedia issuances will also be employed to promote interest in the Centre. These tools will aim to promote Africa Hall in a variety of ways: as a tourist destination; as a learning hub; as an iconic point of reference in Africa's history; and as a place to host culturally important events that promote the values of the United Nations. There will be activities to attract schools and the media. Promotions would also be announced during conferences at ECA, the African Union, schools and events at Ethiopia's numerous cultural centres and festivals, including through the distribution of pamphlets, posters, flyers, banners, brochures and audiovisual materials.

32. Promotional partners would include the Ethiopian Tourism Organization, Ethiopia-based national and international media, the Ministry of Education, Ethiopian Airlines, cultural centres, embassies and regional and international organizations based in Addis Ababa, including the African Union.

33. It is estimated that, with effective promotion and planning, as many as 10,400 people could visit Africa Hall annually. This number could rise significantly during major conferences at the United Nations Conference Centre both at ECA and in Addis Ababa. With adequate information about the Visitors Centre, it is anticipated that as many Ethiopians as foreign visitors would visit Africa Hall. Groups of people that are expected to visit and/or use the Africa Hall for events include students and teachers, visiting scholars, authors, conference participants, filmmakers, members of the press and other media, representatives of non-governmental organizations, United Nations staff members, their families and friends, representatives of Member States and members of the broader diplomatic community in Addis Ababa.

34. The estimate of 10,400 annual visitors to the Visitors Centre is based on discussions with the Ethiopian Tourism Organization, the Government agency directly responsible for tourism in the country. As a new addition to other sites of interest in Ethiopia, Africa Hall could attract some 6,000 visitors per year through the use of initial aggressive marketing. The expectation is that the number would gradually rise as more people become aware of the Centre's existence. Added to this figure would be an additional 4,400 visitors from among the participants attending meetings in Addis Ababa, university students on study tours to the ECA and others touring the country. The estimated figures translate to an average of 200 visitors per week, although the number of visitors is expected to increase steadily over time, possibly to as many as 200 visitors per day, as the full benefit of the extensive publicity and advertising campaign employed by the Visitors Centre is realized and as Africa Hall becomes known as a noteworthy destination.

Table 1
Proposed admission fees for the Africa Hall Visitors Centre

(In United States dollars)

	Admission fees				
No. of annual visitors	*International private primary/high schools and universities*	*Senior citizens/ public school students/disabled*	*International tourists and international students*	*International tourists/adults*	*Gross revenue (annual)*
10 400	3	3	10	10	82 560

35. The proposed rates shown in table 1 were informed by the establishment of the Nairobi Centre, which provided valuable lessons on operations in a developing country context and whose ticket prices are currently below the average prices for tours. At comparable tourist attractions in Ethiopia, prices vary from $1 for residents to $36 and up to $172 for package tours for international tourists. Recent reports show that as a result of investment in the sector, tourism revenues in Ethiopia have surpassed that of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania. Thus, based on comparative analysis of the Kenyan tourism market, and at an exchange rate of $1 to 20 birr, the Visitors Centre would charge a nominal minimum rate of $2 to $15 based on the category of visitor. Children below the age of 6 would not be charged. These are considered reasonable prices given the cost of living in Ethiopia, the purchasing power of the local population and the potential and current growth of the tourism sector. Considering that an estimated 10,320 visitors are expected to

visit Africa Hall annually, it is anticipated that the Visitors Centre would generate some $82,560 per year.

36. Regarding the "speakers' sessions", which will be part of the activities at the Visitors Centre, costs associated with such briefings might include the use of audio-video equipment, depending on the size and requirements of the group. It is expected that there would be an administrative fee of 1,000 birr ($50) for such programmes, payable prior to or on the day of a session. Prices for photo, art and other cultural exhibitions would be 400 birr ($20) per day. The ECA administration is of the view that charges should not be too prohibitive for the speakers, artists and visitors interested in showcasing their work so as not to deter interest.

37. Consistent with Visitors Centres at other major United Nations offices, including New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the Africa Hall Visitors Centre would be managed by the Communications Section of the Public Information and Knowledge Management Division of ECA. It is envisaged that, in the beginning, one public information assistant (Local level) and one tour guide (hired as individual contractor) would be sufficient to run the guided tours during the first biennium. The proposed staffing is envisaged in light of the activities related to the coordination of visits, which would be structured to incorporate lectures, briefings, art exhibits and historical exhibits and the thematic work of the United Nations. The staff would also coordinate activities with other institutions in Addis Ababa that support culturally oriented activities in line with United Nations themes and priorities. In this regard, the estimated number of visitors during peak periods could amount to 200 per week on average, in view of the mix of coordinated visits and briefings.

38. Table 2 below shows the start-up and initiation costs ($50,000) and a breakdown of the projected annual operating expenses ($60,200) of the Visitors Centre.

Table 2
Startup and operation costs
(In United States dollars)

Requirements	*Amounts*
A. Start-up and initiation costs (one-time costs)	50 000
B. Annual operating expenses:	
Public information assistant (Local level)	27 700
Salaries for one tour guide (individual contractor)	5 000
Advertising and promotion	15 000
Miscellaneous services	5 000
Office automation equipment	2 000
Other expendable office supplies	5 000
Uniforms	500
Subtotal (annual operating expenses)	60 200
Total	**110 200**

39. It is anticipated that the combination of the tours, whether during low or high season, art exhibitions and the speakers programme, would draw in enough visitors and generate revenue to offset the costs of the Visitors Centre over many years. The

key to the success of the project is the active promotion of Africa Hall as an iconic place to visit in Addis Ababa. For this to happen, ECA would have to work very closely with governmental institutions, such as the Ethiopian Tourism Organization, the Ministry of Education, schools and other organizations based in Addis Ababa, the African Union and non-governmental organizations as well as universities both in Ethiopia and in the region. ECA would also have to include a visit to Africa Hall in all its conference packages and promotional materials so that participants may expect it each time. Partnerships with key organizations, such as Ethiopian Airlines, hotels and the media, would also be important for generating sustained visibility.

E. Project progress

40. It should be noted, however, that, based on the current state of planning with regard to the business case for Africa Hall, it is not possible to definitively determine whether the operational costs would be entirely offset by income generating activities.

41. As explained in the previous report of the Secretary-General, the Africa Hall renovation project is planned to comprise five stages, of which stage 1 (preparation) and stage 2 (design) have been completed. Stage 3 (pre-construction) is currently under way, with ongoing preparation of tender documentation by the lead consultant. This will be followed by stage 4 (construction) and the project will be concluded at stage 5 (project close-out).

42. The detailed results of stage 2 were summarized by the lead consultant in a report that formed the basis of the project proposal approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A.

43. In December 2015, the Headquarters Committee on Contracts recommended approval for the re-engagement of the lead consultant (who developed stages 1 and 2) to carry out the professional services needed for stages 3, 4 and 5. Following the approval of the Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Central Support Services, ECA, in coordination with the Procurement Division and the Office of Legal Affairs, negotiated the contractual details. The implementation of stage 3 (pre-construction services, which entail completion of the design developed in stage 2 as needed for the technical documentation) started on 16 May 2016.

44. Additional studies within the scope of the project that are being finalized are related to: hazardous material mitigation; adapting the entry gate to security requirements; planning the temporary and permanent swing space moves of all affected entities at the west end of the campus; and the detailed designing of the exhibition area. To date, the design remains consistent with the previous stages, and no changes in scope are proposed.

45. In order to include local knowledge and capacity in the project, as encouraged by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A, the lead consultant engaged local professionals to assist the international experts responsible for various disciplines.

46. In addition, in line with General Assembly resolution 70/248 A, on 3 March 2016 the Office of Central Support Services conducted an informal briefing of Member States in the context of the first resumed session of the Assembly. The briefing touched on all ongoing capital projects being undertaken by the Organization, including the renovation of the Africa Hall.

47. In the framework of the project-specific manual, the Project Manager, in coordination with the ECA Procurement Unit and the Overseas Property Management Unit of the Office of Central Support Services, outlined the contracting strategy for awarding and implementing work on the project, which proposes a split in its implementation between the early work (decanting), the main contract and the work on art conservation and the permanent exhibition.

48. In August 2016, a formal expression of interest was issued regarding construction services: the final selection of eligible bidders is forecast by the end of 2016. As shown in the figure (under para. 70 below), tender documentation is scheduled for completion by the end of the first quarter of 2017, while tender action for the various stages of work is to be implemented in a sequenced order starting January 2017.

F. Solicitation of voluntary contributions

49. ECA has reached out to all Member States to solicit voluntary contributions that may provide them with an added sense of ownership with regard to the project, in particular the renovation of Africa Hall, which is a historical landmark. Similarly, discussions have been initiated with the host country regarding possible voluntary contributions both in cash and in kind (for example, the additional land needed for the visitors parking lot).

50. The Secretary-General is pleased to report that two Member States, Mali and Switzerland, have confirmed their concrete interest in providing voluntary contributions. Mali contributed $52,192 in July 2016 and discussions with Switzerland are currently under way to define the modalities of its contribution. China has also expressed interest in making a contribution to the project. While it cannot yet be ascertained whether these contributions will fall within the original scope of the project, in which case a corresponding reduction of Member States assessment would be reflected, any progress in this regard will be reported in subsequent progress reports of the Secretary-General.

G. Project governance

51. ECA, with the assistance of the Office of Central Support Services at Headquarters, has further refined the project governance structure, thus ensuring that an effective managerial framework for the project execution is in place, including independent risk management services.

52. The proposed project governance structure, which includes the following salient features, is shown in annex II to the present report:

(a) A Stakeholders Committee to assist the Executive Secretary of ECA in his role as the project owner responsible for high-level decision-making and proactively managing the project, as well as providing user input and assurance in the design and delivery of project products;

(b) An Advisory Board to support the Executive Secretary and the Stakeholders' Committee in ensuring a timely delivery of the expected organizational and project-specific objectives, as well as eliciting and managing the

expectations of external stakeholders (for example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the African Union and others);

(c) Project oversight ensuring central supervision, coordination and support between the Office of Central Support Services at Headquarters and ECA on site, including independent risk management services;

(d) Establishment of the dedicated project management team and the project support team, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and reporting lines which will ensure delivery of the project by monitoring activity and completion of the work on a daily basis, in line with a project-specific manual that is based on the Organization's guidelines for the management of construction projects issued by the Office of Central Support Services.

Stakeholders Committee and Advisory Board

53. The Stakeholders Committee, which is led by the Executive Secretary or his designee, provides advice and guidance on the management of the overall project. The Committee draws its members from the Organization, inclusive of ECA offices, such as the Conference Management Section, the Strategic Planning and Operational Quality Division, the Public Information and Knowledge Management Division, the Security and Safety Section and the Facility Management Section, and includes a representative from the Office of Central Support Services in New York.

54. The terms of references for the Stakeholders Committee have been finalized and its first meeting is scheduled during the third quarter of 2016.

55. The draft terms of references for the Advisory Board have been defined and the establishment of its membership is in progress. The Board will provide non-binding strategic advice to the Executive Secretary in his role as project owner, including independent and impartial knowledge, understanding and strategic thinking for the project, and will effectively coordinate and respond to interest expressed by Member States. In line with General Assembly resolution 70/248 A and in line with best practices and lessons learned from previous capital projects, the Executive Secretary contacted Member States to solicit their interest in the constitution of the Board.

56. In addition, the Executive Secretary of ECA, together with the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services, met with the President of Ethiopia on 31 May 2016 to express gratitude for the host countries' efforts and involvement in the project, and to discuss ways to support project implementation.

Dedicated project management team and project support

57. The composition of the dedicated project management team and the project support team, which was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A, comprises the following nine positions: a Project Manager (P-5); a Project Architect/Engineer (P-4); a Procurement Officer (P-3); a Supervisor-Architectural/Civil/Structural Engineer (National Officer); a Supervisor-Electrical/Mechanical/Security/Telecom Engineer (National Officer); a Clerk of Works (National Officer); an Administrative Assistant (Local level); a Finance Assistant (Local level); and a Logistics Assistant (Local level).

58. The Project Manager and the Administrative Assistant were appointed in March 2016; recruitment has been completed for the positions of Procurement Officer (P-3), Supervisor-Architectural/Civil/Structural Engineer (National Officer), Clerk of Works (National Officer) and Logistics Assistant (Local level). Recruitment for the remaining members of the team is ongoing.

59. OIOS, in its report on the audit of the management of construction activities and related processes at ECA, recommended that the Commission, in conjunction with the Office of Central Support Services, clarify the staff management plan in order to cope with potential skills gaps at ECA, as well as functions not catered for, in particular in the areas of specialist engineering expertise, communications and legal support. Therefore, within the approved maximum overall cost of the project, additional resources for specialist consultancy services are proposed to address these gaps. These refer to on-call/ad hoc experts to ensure that engineering disciplines as well as other professional gaps are covered. The resources are reflected in the updated project cost plan in annex III to the present report.

60. Additionally, in order to provide the increased level of oversight responsibility assigned to the Office of Central Support Services by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A, it is proposed that a position of Project Coordinator (P-4) be established from 1 January 2017 until the completion of the project, to be cost-shared with the proposed seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) premises in Bangkok (see A/71/333). This position would be based in the Office of Central Support Services at Headquarters. The incumbent of this position would provide day-to-day oversight, guidance and technical support to the Africa Hall project manager, under the guidance of the Chief, Overseas Properties Management Unit. Emphasis would be placed on contract management of the independent risk management firm, which would report directly to the Management Unit in order to ensure its independent and external role, complementing the work of the dedicated project management team and facilitating the team's risk identification and assessment activities, including the development of mitigation strategies. The other 50 per cent of the position will be funded from the ESCAP seismic project, which the incumbent will also support, as explained in the report of the Secretary-General on that project (see A/71/333, annex III, para. (k)).

61. The Secretary-General recalls paragraph 57 of his previous progress report (A/70/363 and Corr.1), which addressed the need to establish six new positions, within the support team, for Security Officers. The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/248 A, endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/70/7/Add.21, para. 44) that a further revision and resubmission of the proposal be made in the next progress report. Construction work, scheduled to commence in late 2017, will require a separation of the construction area from the main campus, which will have to be secured and protected, including controlled access for a large number of workers on a daily basis. The requested positions for Security Officers would be needed in order to provide security, protection and controlled access to the construction site. In view of the need for these additional services, ECA reiterates its proposal to add six Security Officers to its actual workforce within the approved maximum overall cost of the project.

62. Resource requirements in the biennium 2016-2017 for the above-mentioned specialist consultancy services (para. 58 above), Project Coordinator (para. 59

above) and Security Officer positions (para. 60 above) are further elaborated in paragraph 74 below.

Independent risk-management firm

63. In order to strengthen the assurance functions for the project, it is proposed that a robust risk management framework be implemented in line with industry best practices and lessons learned from previous capital projects. In addition to the "integrated" risk management activities carried out by the project team together with the lead consultant, a professional risk-management firm would provide independent risk management services under the supervision of the Office of Central Support Services, similar to other capital projects undertaken by the United Nations. The risk management framework would protect both the organizational as well as project-specific objectives and would include the management of opportunities and threats through a risk register and provide the basis for a risk-based approach in establishing and managing the contingency provisions.

64. The professional risk management firm would be responsible for developing the overall risk management strategy for the project and its implementation in accordance with the risk and reporting standards and the governance framework of the project. To that end, the professional risk-management firm would, on a regular basis, provide an independent assessment of the intended project actions and facilitate risk management and assurance expertise for the project. The firm would take the lead in identifying and assessing risks and in developing management response strategies for both opportunities and threats, and would ensure that risks are monitored by nominated individuals on a regular basis and risk responses are implemented as planned.

65. The risk management firm would report directly to the Office of Central Support Services to ensure its independent and external role, complementing the work of the dedicated project management team and facilitating the team's risk identification and assessment activities, including development of mitigation strategies. The firm would also ensure that risk management and quality assurance services are implemented and would provide high-level advice and opinions to the Executive Secretary of ECA to support informed decision-making in his role as project owner.

66. Recruitment of the firm is scheduled to be carried out by the Office of Central Support Services in late 2016, with an expected completion in early 2017. Resource requirements in 2016-2017 for the risk management firm are elaborated in paragraph 74 below.

H. Coordination with the host country

67. In line with best practices and lessons learned from past capital projects, ECA is in close coordination with the host country. Negotiations have begun positively with the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on refining and enhancing the existing agreement for the implementation of construction projects, with particular focus on the procedures for expediting the importation of project-related goods, the registration requirements for private companies and the need for additional land to provide for parking at the west gate of the Visitors' Centre.

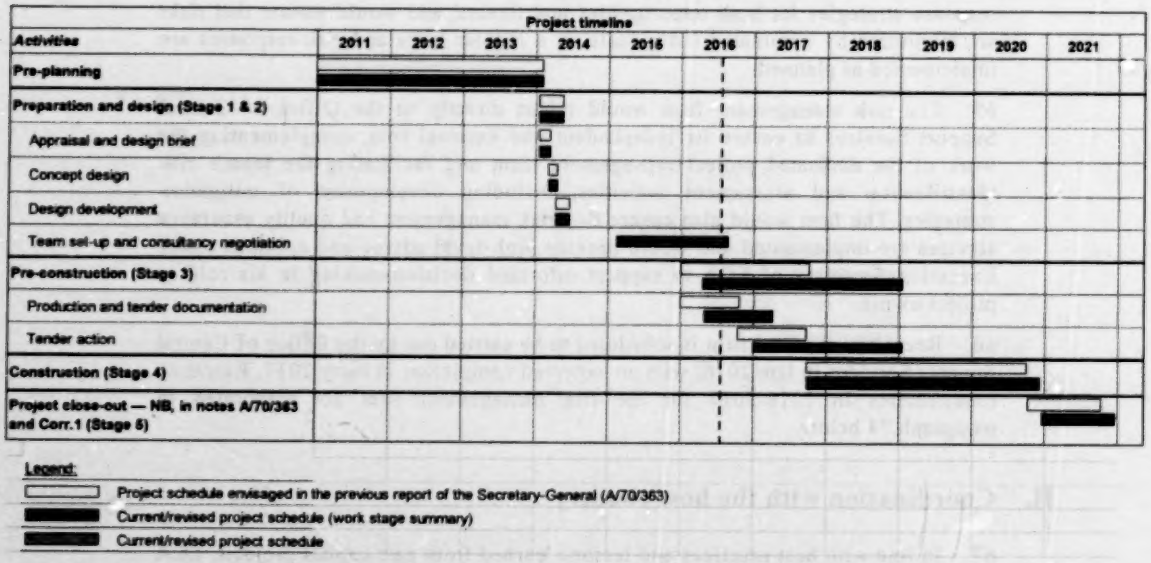
68. Negotiations with the host country, which included a high-level meeting with the President of Ethiopia, as noted in paragraph 55 above, led to expressions of solid support. ECA has also invited the host country to become a member of the project's Advisory Board.

I. Project schedule

69. Contract negotiations for the professional services required for stages 3 to 5 of the project took longer than anticipated. In order to make up for lost time, it is now planned to split the construction phase into two parts: one for early work, entailing relocation of existing commercial tenants and demolition work; and the other for main construction work. These measures would allow for an overlapping of stages 3 and 4 and would shorten the procurement process for this early work, enabling construction (stage 4) to start as planned in late 2017 with no effects on the scheduled project completion in 2021.

70. The figure below shows the project schedule. The scheduled project execution period remains mostly unchanged as compared to the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/70/363 and Corr.1).

Figure
Project schedule for the renovation of the Africa Hall Building: as at July 2016



J. Contingency provision

71. The maximum overall cost of $56.9 million for the project was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A.

72. The approved costs include contingency provisions of 20 per cent of the estimated construction cost, inclusive of consultancy fees and allowances for price escalations. ECA, with support of the lead consultant, has started refining the estimate by breaking it down and linking it to a risk assessment. The preliminary risk assessment includes a consideration of conditions in the construction market, the inflationary trend, the complexity of the work and any logistical constraints, for example, requirements for imported materials. A complete quantitative analysis linking the actual contingency funding requirements with assessed risks will be performed once the independent risk management firm is brought on board in early 2017.

K. Next steps

73. The actions to be undertaken during the next reporting period are:

(a) Completion of the appointment of the dedicated project management and project support team;

(b) Selection and contracting of the independent risk management firm, allowing for the definition of a detailed risk strategy and the commencement of a quantitative analysis of risks, linked to the required amount of contingency provisions;

(c) Finalization of the governance structure, including establishment of the Advisory Board;

(d) Completion of the activities foreseen for stage 3, including tender action and award for the construction work;

(e) Start of early construction work related to the temporary rehousing of the present functions located in Africa Hall Building.

L. Status and projection of project expenditures for the biennium 2016-2017

74. Table 3 below provides the status and projection of expenditures in 2016 and 2017.

Table 3

Status and projection of expenditures for the biennium 2016-2017

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Actual expenditures as at 31 July 2016	*Projected expenditures from 1 August to 31 December 2016*	*Total projected expenditures in 2016*	*Projected expenditures in 2017*
Section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance				
Construction-related costs				
Construction costs	–	–	–	350.0
Escalation costs	–	–	–	29.2
Consultant fees	983.2	472.4	1 455.6	2 273.4
Contingencies	–	291.1	291.1	512.5
Subtotal, Section 33	**983.2**	**763.5**	**1 746.7**	**3 165.2**

	Actual expenditures as at 31 July 2016	*Projected expenditures from 1 August to 31 December 2016*	*Total projected expenditures in 2016*	*Projected expenditures in 2017*
Section 18, Economic and social development for Africa				
Project supervision and management				
Project management team	109.6	290.4	400.0	868.2
Travel	4.9	13.1	18.0	15.0
Subtotal, Section 18	**114.5**	**303.5**	**418.0**	**883.2**
Total estimated costs 2016-2017	**1 097.7**	**1 067.0**	**2 164.7**	**4 048.4**

75. Table 4 below compares the cost plan for the biennium 2016-2017 as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A, against the revised cost plan shown in annex III to the present report. The main variances between the projected expenditures for the biennium 2016-2017 and the approved appropriation are explained below:

(a) A reduction of $5,109,700 in estimated construction trade costs is due to a shift of the schedule of work into the years 2018-2021 owing to the fact that contract negotiations with the lead consultant took longer than planned, affecting certain project activities under stage 3;

(b) A reduction of $713,000 in estimated escalation (pre-construction) costs reflects a better understanding of costs since the pre-construction phase is almost over and the risk of significant cost escalations is much lower;

(c) A reduction of $313,500 in the costs for design and supervision services is a result of negotiations with the lead consultant that led to a reduced contract amount;

(d) The estimated costs of $90,000 relates to the provision of independent risk management services, as explained in paragraphs 63 to 66 above, which were not considered in the initial project costs in the previous report (A/70/363 and Corr.1);

(e) A reduction of $1,227,200 in estimated contingencies is a result of reduced construction trade costs in 2017, as explained in subparagraph (a) above;

(f) A reduction of $9,100 in estimated costs for the project management team is the net result of: (i) a reduction of $71,600 due to the delayed recruitment process; and (ii) an increase of $62,500 to provide for 50 per cent of the cost of a Project Coordinator (P-4) at Headquarters, as explained in paragraph 60 above;

(g) The estimated costs of $60,000 are needed for specialist consultancy services available on demand as recommended by OIOS, as explained in paragraph 59 above;

(h) The costs of $37,600 relate to six Security Officer (Local level) positions effective October 2017, as described in paragraph 61 above.

Table 4
Revision to the cost plan for the proposed renovation of the Africa Hall Building for biennium 2016-2017
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Approved for 2016-2017[a]	*Revised cost plan for 2016-2017*	*Variance*
Section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance			
Construction costs			
Construction trade costs	5 459.7	350.0	(5 109.7)
Escalation	742.2	29.2	(713.0)
Design and supervision	3 952.5	3 639.0	(313.5)
Risk management	–	90.0	90.0
Contingencies	2 030.9	803.6	(1 227.2)
Subtotal, section 33	**12 185.3**	**4 911.9**	**(7 273.4)**
Section 18, Economic and social development for Africa			
Project supervision and management			
Project management team	1 217.3	1 208.2	(9.1)
Consultancies/expertise	–	60.0	60.0
Travel	36.0	33.0	(3.0)
Subtotal, section 18	**1 253.3**	**1 301.2**	**47.9**
Section 34, Safety and security			
Physical security	–	37.6	37.6
Total	**13 438.6**	**6 250.7**	**(7 187.9)**

[a] In line with the cost plan set out in annex V of document A/70/363 and Corr.1 and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A.

76. The revised estimated resource requirements for each year are presented in annex III to the present report.

IV. Update on the renovation and occupancy of the United Nations Conference Centre at Addis Ababa

77. A significant reversal of the underutilization trend of the United Nations Conference Centre at Addis Ababa has been noticeable since 2014. The response of ECA related to the utilization rate of the Conference Centre has been robust, against the background of concerns regarding the decline in the Centre's utilization rate from 76 per cent in 2009 to 62 per cent in 2012, and 67 per cent in 2013. The Conference Centre has achieved a capacity utilization increase of 5 per cent since 2014: from 85 per cent in 2014-2015 to 90 per cent during the first six months of 2016. Considering the large number of conferences scheduled in 2016 (over 200 events until the end of December), there is an expectation of increased utilization levels.

78. In response to General Assembly resolution 70/9 (paras. 25 and 26), a closer partnership with the African Union Commission and United Nations agencies based in Addis Ababa, as well as proactive marketing initiatives targeting local and international organizations, have resulted in a significant gain in the utilization of the United Nations Conference Centre at Addis Ababa. The renovation work on the Conference Centre is in progress and the ECA plans to complete that work in 2017.

79. With regard to the renovation of the roof of the United Nations Conference Centre, at the end of 2015, after the finalization of the design and consulting work, a qualified contractor was awarded the contract for the completion of the final phase of the project (a remaining area of 7,562 m^2). According to the schedule submitted by the contractor, which takes into consideration the planning of major conferences and optimal annual weather conditions, renovation work will start on 1 October 2016 and substantial completion will be achieved by 31 December 2016.

80. Proper attention has been paid to bringing the interior of the conference facilities to the highest international standards. The remaining work includes: recarpeting of the conference rooms and the installation of electrical, mechanical and audiovisual upgrades to comply with current industry standards in Conference Rooms 1 and 2. Mindful of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see A/70/7/Add.21, para. 63), entrusting ECA to ensure that the facilities at the Conference Centre comply with accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities, the remaining work also features the creation of access for persons with disabilities, which will require a complete rebuilding of both podiums. The design of podiums to address disability needs is scheduled to be completed by December 2016, followed by actual installation work in 2017. Carpets are being purchased and their installation coordinated and integrated with the electrical, audiovisual, information technology and architectural features. The installation work is scheduled to be finalized in the first quarter of 2017.

81. To leverage the existing significant investment in hardware of the Conference Centre, attention has been paid to the continuous maintenance and improvement of facilities, including the drawing up of a comprehensive and integrated multimedia solution in the biennium 2014-2015. In this regard it should be noted that the Government of Ethiopia made an important contribution to the upgrading efforts by providing a high quality Bosch mobile audio and video system, including infrared simultaneous interpretation equipment, high definition pan-tilt-zoom cameras, digital audio and video recorders and wireless microphones. The system complemented existing facilities and was used for the first time during the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in July 2015.

82. Additional digital technology upgrades are being installed during 2016. In May 2016, additional improvement projects have been undertaken, as a reflection of the same concern to enhance the standard of services at the Conference Centre. All six conference rooms have been equipped with a new video system that helps interpreters to follow speakers in real time and to deliver a more faithful and nuanced interpretation of conference proceedings. The system also provides the audience with a better view of the presentations and video aids. In addition, in Conference Rooms 1 and 2, new LCD monitors have been installed at podiums to assist speakers in following the reading of their presentations. In parallel, a new high definition audio-video system has been installed in all conference rooms,

allowing for high quality recording and live broadcasting of the conference proceedings.

V. Recommended actions to be taken by the General Assembly

83. **The General Assembly is requested to:**

(a) Take note of the progress made since the issuance of the previous progress report of the Secretary-General;

(b) Take note of the governance structure of the project for the renovation of the Africa Hall;

(c) Take note of the revised cost plan for the Africa Hall project;

(d) Approve the business case for the Visitors Centre and invite the Secretary-General to include funding requirements of the Visitors Centre under Income Section 3, Services to the public, in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2020-2021;

(e) Approve the establishment of six Security Officer (Local level) positions, effective October 2017, under section 34, Safety and security, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017;

(f) Take note of the proposed establishment of the Project Coordinator (P-4), for which approval has been sought in the context of the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacement project at ESCAP, and the joint funding of that position within the approved maximum overall project costs of the Africa Hall renovation project and the cost of the proposed ESCAP seismic project.

Annex I

Project cost for the construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Expenditure as at 31 December 2014	*Expenditure during 2015*	*Expenditure January 2016 to August 2016*	*Total for 2015-2016*	*Expenditure as at August 2016*
	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)*	*(d) = (b) + (c)*	*(e) = (a) + (d)*
Approved in resolutions 56/270 and 60/248					
Construction costs[a]	8 427.9	–	1 016.3	1 016.3	9 445.4
Design, consultancy services and project coordination	1 652.9	19.6	20.3	39.9	1 692.8
Site work[b]	1 165.9	187.9	431.7	619.6	1 785.5
Workstations and furniture	331.3	24.0	–	24.0	355.5
Contingencies[c]					
Approved in resolution 63/263 (programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009)					
Installation of information technology and telephone equipment	614.3		–		614.3
Approved in resolution 62/238					
Safety and security[d]	759.8	–	–	–	759.8
Internal access roads[e]	233.7	8.5		8.5	242.2
Parking and landscaping[e]	–	–	–	–	–
Generators and generator house[e]	406.7	14.8	16.2	30.9	437.7
Total	**13 592.9**	**254.8**	**1 484.4**[f]	**1 739.2**	**15 333.2**

[a] Construction costs include: the main contract value of $7,451,700, as signed on 1 April 2010; amendment 1 for additional resources totalling $1,000,100 from the budgets of the United Nations Office to the African Union and African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur for the top floor; amendments 2-15, totalling $1,437,600, less savings from value engineering of $522,100. These also include amendment 12, which generated savings of $93,000 as a result of the centralization of the uninterrupted power supply system.

[b] Ancillary projects phase II.

[c] Budgeted contingency of $925,200 has been fully expended.

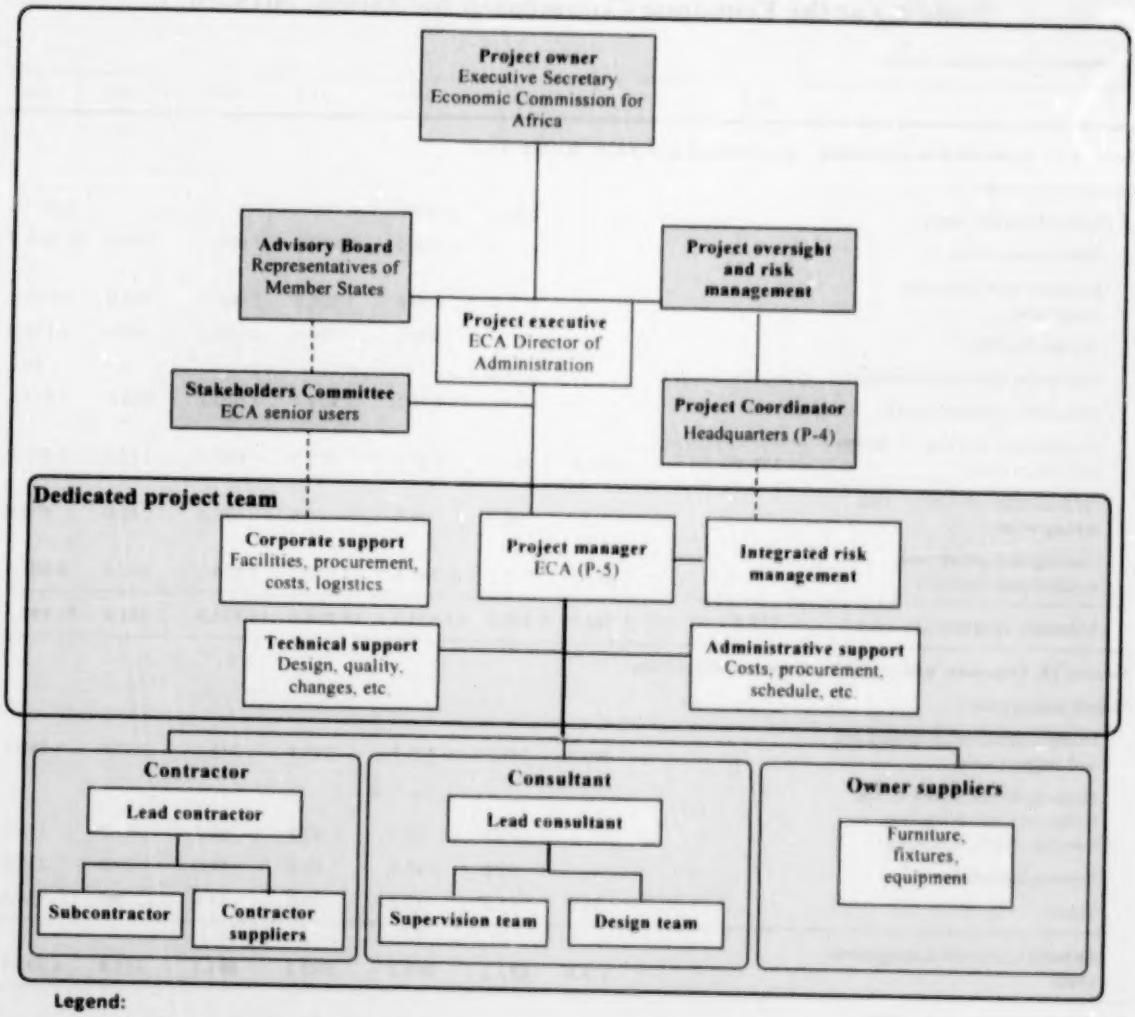
[d] Resources in the amount of $759,800 for security requirements were approved under section 33, Safety and security, in resolution 62/238 as part of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

[e] Ancillary projects phase I.

[f] The final release of retention in the amount of $468,370 for the project will be addressed as described in paragraph 10 of the present report.

Annex II

Project governance structure



Annex III

Project cost plan for the renovation of the Africa Hall Building at the Economic Commission for Africa: 2015-2021

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2015[a]	*2015[b]*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*Total[c]*
Section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance									
Construction costs									
Early/decanting work	–	–	–	350.0	1 500.0	–	–	–	1 850.0
Main construction	–	–	–	–	6 900.0	8 000.0	7 000.0	900.0	22 800.0
Furniture and high-tech equipment	–	–	–	–	600.0	1 500.0	1 900.0	250.0	4 250.0
Art and exhibits	–	–	–	–	500.0	500.0	1 190.0	146.0	2 336.0
Escalation (pre-construction)	–	–	–	29.2					29.2
Escalation (construction)	–	–	–		1 051.2	1 979.4	2 420.3	426.3	5 877.2
Professional services — design and supervision	727.8	–	1 455.6	2 183.4	656.6	773.9	609.7	170.4	5 849.6
Professional services — risk management	–	–	–	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	40.0	400.0
Contingency (work and professional services)	–	–	291.1	512.5	2 241.6	2 550.7	2 624.0	378.5	8 598.4
Subtotal, construction costs	**727.8**	**–**	**1 746.7**	**3 165.2**	**13 539.3**	**15 394.0**	**15 834.0**	**2 311.2**	**51 990.4**
Section 18, Economic and social development for Africa									
Project management									
Dedicated project management and support team	–	–	400.0	745.7	745.7	745.7	745.7	267.8	3 650.6
Dedicated coordinator at the Office of Central Support Services (50% of costing)	–	–	–	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5	312.5
Consultancies/expertise	–	–	–	60.0	60.0	60.0	58.5	20.0	258.5
Travel	–	–	18.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	5.5	83.5
Subtotal, project management costs	**–**	**–**	**418.0**	**883.2**	**883.2**	**883.2**	**881.7**	**355.8**	**4 305.1**
Section 34, Safety and security									
Physical security requirements	–	–	–	37.6	150.2	150.2	150.2	112.6	600.8
Total	**727.8**	**–**	**2 164.7**	**4 086.0**	**14 572.7**	**16 427.4**	**16 865.9**	**2 779.6**	**56 896.3**

[a] As per financial statements.
[b] Based on the current review of obligation status.
[c] Total is the sum of columns 2015[b] up to 2021.